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Burying the Dead and Religious Diversification in 21st Century Chile: Christianity and Modernity in a Contested Topology

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Abstract

This paper (number 2) in the research project "Burying the Dead" follows the introductory comments and typology of a previous paper (Aguilar, 2024) but moves the material context of cemeteries to Chile assuming a diverse context. In India and Chile, indigenous centralised civilisations existed well before the arrival of European colonisers, and Chile became the second site within globality in which the topology of the dead is explored. Research visits to cemeteries in Chile and archives were carried out between June and September 2024 while research on mass graves from the period 1973-1989 in Chile has been carried out since 1999[1]. This paper outlines the historical departure from Catholic parish cemeteries, the only possibility during the colonial Spanish period in Chile (1541-1910, that took place at the end of the 19th century with the foundation of the Santiago General Cemetery. By examining the historical and material realities of the Santiago General Cemetery and the Recoleta Catholic Cemetery, this paper opens academic discussions on public health policy, constitutional issues of secularity, and faith-reason within the state of Chile. The 1925 Chilean Constitution made a clear division between the roles of Church and State allowing for the first time for the legal existence of non-Catholic cemeteries. Indigenous burial places already existed long before the arrival of the Spaniards and some of those cemeteries have been kept as historical patrimony of Chile. Protestant cemeteries were allowed within the larger state cemeteries since the 19th Century, namely the British cemeteries of Santiago and Valparaíso. This paper introduces the socio-reality of monuments and memorials to the dead by arguing that the socio-political relationality of the living is broken when the living die because the epistemological theologies of the dead are enacted on

[1]Fieldwork in Chile from June to September 2024 was funded by a generous grant by the Milarepa Foundation for Dialogue with Asia of Chile. I am grateful to those who helped with the research, particularly the help of the office of the Catholic Cemetery Recoleta in Santiago through Katherine Bustos Fiabane and Domingo Garrido Ramírez.

material ways that divide the world of the dead according to their systemic and semantic universe. Thus, previous works on Patio 29 of the General Cemetery where the bodies of political prisoners were buried without the consent of their next-of-kin after the 1973 military coup in Chile as well as other burials within churches such as the Archbishops' Mausoleum in the Metropolitical Cathedral of Santiago are incorporated within a material separation of the dead and the building of monuments to the dead that represent a disunity in diversity.

Keywords

Chile, Cemeteries, Santiago General Cemetery, Cuchipuy Indigenous Burial Ground, Doctrine of Discovery, Post-Colonial Cemeteries, Santiago Catholic Cemeteries, Santiago Jewish Cemetery

1. Introduction: Christianity and Modernity

Any study of burials in Latin America requires a diachronic return to the colonial past because with the arrival of the Spanish in 1492, the encounter between indigenous populations and Europeans changed the nature of secluded understandings of epistemologies of the dead and their topology. The "doctrine of discovery" became the unforeseen norm for the colonisers and the Americas became part of European empires. Thus, when Pope Alexander VI divided the world between Spain and Portugal at the end of the 15th Century, the whole European world was part of the Catholic Church, and therefore all territories of encounter became part of such unified European world (Strathern, 2019). The process of world division carried out by Alexander VI before the Protestant Reformation (1521) gave to Spain and Portugal half of the world each with the known East part of the world (Asia) to Portugal and the West (Latin America) to Spain (Thomas, 2010). This process led to the absolute power of the Catholic monarchs and their global supremacy in exploration, and extraction of resources with one single aim: the conversion of souls and the care of the indigenous populations (Viveiro De Castro, 2011).

As a result of such mandate Spain and Portugal occupied indigenous lands, conducted wars and declared themselves owners of all lands they "discovered" (Dussel, 1995). Abuses, slavery, pillage and the destruction of indigenous societies became part of such "doctrine of discovery" (Walvin, 2022). However, in 2023 Pope Francis made a clear declaration of the "doctrine of discovery" stating that such abuses were not part of the teaching of the Catholic Church (Holy See, 2023: Section 6). Such "doctrine of discovery" was to have a central place in the discussions of cemeteries in Chile that until the 19th Century were possession of the Church, particularly through parish cemeteries. The "doctrine of discovery" understood by the conquerors as full possession of lands, peoples and resources was initially debated between the monarch and the Church with the sense of conversion to Christianity under the Spanish Crown. Instead, it developed into the abuses of local authorities that didn't recognise the materiality of indigenous peoples,

including graveyards and sacred lands (Jacobi, 2000). Thus, Pope Francis stated the following on his apology for the abuses carried out by settlers and conquerors in the Americas during colonial times:

> The legal concept of "discovery" was debated by colonial powers from the sixteenth century onward and found particular expression in the nineteenth century jurisprudence of courts in several countries, according to which the discovery of lands by settlers granted an exclusive right to extinguish, either by purchase or conquest, the title to or possession of those lands by indigenous peoples. Certain scholars have argued that the basis of the aforementioned "doctrine" is to be found in several papal documents, such as the Bulls *Dum Diversas* (1452), *Romanus Pontifex* (1455) and *Inter Caetera* (1493) (Holy See, 2023: Section 5).

These historical discussions are of importance for the setting, foundation and maintenance of cemeteries in the Chilean Virreinato, attached to the Virreinato del Peru until 1798, and then completely autonomous until the end of the Spanish presence in 1810 and the defeat of the reconquering forces of Spain in 1818 (Williamson, 2009). As a result of such autonomy, colonial Chile operated, for the most part, a division between the area of Santiago assigned to Spanish orders such as Franciscans, Dominicans, and Jesuits and an indigenous south that was considered an unsafe area and that later became a territory of the Bavarian Capuchins and the emerging local diocesan clergy (Gali, 2024). In the case of cemeteries, non-Catholic cemeteries were not allowed within Santiago or Valparaiso while every parish church had a graveyard under the strict rule of burial for Catholics. Colonial states had their own cemeteries and chapels where the same rules applied (Will De Chaparro & Achim, 2012).

It can be argued that cemeteries were overlooked as proper social divisions until the 19th Century so that while indigenous burial grounds were recognised, Catholic colonial burials were carried out inside Churches, following the custom of the Middle Ages (Frey Sánchez, 2013). By overlooking cemeteries there was a complete division between the life of the living and of the dead so that "the doctrine of discovery" was purposely misunderstood by colonial settlers as permission to do as they wished within the world of the living (Charles & Rah, 2019; Greenberg, 2016). However, canonically within the rule of the Spanish monarchy, particularly under Queen Isabella, the *encomiendas* led by Catholic clergy entailed workers who were not slaves and were under the protection of the Crown to be baptised and brought up as Catholics, and therefore protected by the envoys of the Crown (Tremlett, 2017). Thus, Pope Francis was clear in March 2023 when through the Vatican dicastery reiterated that "'the doctrine of discovery' was not part of the teaching of the Catholic Church" (Holy See, 2023: Section 6). The cultural abuses by the envoys of the monarchs of Spain and Portugal in the Americas coincided with the explorations and processes of conversion to Christianity that started with the "encounter" between Christopher Columbus and the indigenous populations

of Latin America, and the explorations of Jesuit missionaries in Asia during the 16th and 17th centuries (Userler, 2022).

Narratives of empire, appropriation of indigenous lands, and processes of order that brought European thought, customs, ideas, and Christianity to independent and indigenous worlds of semantic significance came into existence. In the colonies, there was a clear difference between the work of Spanish and Portuguese Franciscans and Dominicans in the Americas who followed the principle of "the doctrine of discovery" and the work of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) in Asia. In Asia, where the Jesuits encountered centralised civilisations with written sources the Jesuits became an arm of theological inculturation assuming local cultural ways in India, China and Japan who were concerned with issues of reason and faith rather than land (Po-Chia Hsia, 2010).

Agents of such imperial imposition of ideas or encounters between different epistemologies were soldiers, colonial officers, and Christian missionaries. Later, in the era of the European Enlightenment, philosophers such as Hegel in his lectures on the philosophy of history (1892) denied any contribution to universal thought to Africans, ignored Latin Americans and only focused on the plausibility of the beginning of history in Japan and China (Aguilar, 2002). Thus, the Protestant Reformation and the European Enlightenment created a sense that every possible epistemology, truth and knowledge was centred in Europe be within the colonial powers of the exultation of the French revolution and the Scottish Enlightenment, a tragedy in contemporary terms of postcolonial history (Scott, 2004). It is plausible to argue that the Protestant Reformation created such an emphasis on personal salvation through the written teachings of the Bible whereby it was impossible for the colonies of Europe to challenge colonialism within society in which orality was of such importance creating "organised domination and unprecedented levels of violence" (McMahon, 2023). On the other hand, the literacy boom required to appreciate the Bible superseded the popular religiosity that was allowed by the first Catholic missionaries who themselves underwent a process of enculturation with settled practices of inculturation.

The Enlightenment and the advancement of modernity created an atmosphere where European thought was overvalued and indigenous thought undervalued, an understanding that also permeated practices of burial and the delimitation of cemeteries. Thus, European cemeteries became in Chile "sacred land" while indigenous burial places became burial grounds rather than cities of the dead filled with art and architecture, order and beauty, gates to Heaven, as it was in Europe. Within such Catholic world Catholics had access to consecrated lands while Protestants did not have the right to be buried in Catholic consecrated land. In other words, they could not be buried at all within urban cemeteries.

In the case of Latin America, colonial powers operated freely before American Independence, and Christianity challenged, and dismissed through a position of power, the indigenous epistemes of indigenous peoples (Alconini & Covey, 2018). Thus, centralised and segmentary kingdoms and indigenous empires such as the

Incas, the Mayas, and the Aztecs together with hundreds of thousands of small societies with their languages, with their social structures and their religions were dismissed by a unifying imperial tenant, that of the centrality of the Christ as the maker of monarchs. José Luis Escalona has argued that the conquerors encountered indigenous without unity in their history, already fragmentised before the conquest by inequality in ecological and economic conditions and didn't take ancient civilisations seriously (Escalona Victoria, 2009: p. 21).

What was reasonable and truthful for European Christians and for indigenous peoples clashed in a battle of ideas, epistemes, and debates that impacted the organisation of imperial territories and segmentary kingdoms. It is important to note that during the whole encounter between the indigenous populations of Latin America and the colonial power of Spain, there was only one peace treaty, that of Quilín (5th & 6th January 1641) between the Mapuches and the Spanish colonial army (Bengoa, 2007). The treaty secured the existence of the Mapuches and drew borders between indigenous lands and the Spanish territories. Those borders were kept tight until the independence of Chile from Spain (1810) and the subsequent bloody claim of land by the state of Chile within a process of state formation (Herr, 2019).

However, the greatest clash between indigenous peoples and European powers was on the metaphysical understanding of death and the afterlife that had been severely challenged by Christianity (and Islam in Africa). Egypt seemed to have escaped such nihilism by an extraordinary European fascination with the Egyptian world of the dead, mummies, the Egyptian Book of the Dead, and the development of ritual mortuary cycles. Until today Egypt dominates a European curiosity with pyramids, burial sites and the Egyptian gods of the dead. Angela Stienne has correctly argued that "at the core of this long-standing interest in Egyptian mummies is a very human concern -death" (Stienne, 2022: p. 19). I would argue further, death and burial of the dead according to rank, order and social inclusion/exclusion, even after death and in the context of sacred burials and cemeteries (Black, 2019) has certainly dominated our curiosity with the world of the dead. And this paper is no more than a product of curiosity so that the question central to this paper is how have the dead been buried and organised in Chile since colonial times? And how are they organised within 21st Century Chile in the context of Christianity and modernity.

2. Burying the Dead: Diachronic Research and Epistemological Questions

It is a truism that the dead do not bury the dead, but the living creates a city of the dead to materially build their memory so that the dead can live comfortably in their new home. For the living fight about the dead as much as their own memories of them, so that for example in the case of Rwanda there has been a clash between state policy, bodies were not buried to remember the genocide, and their proper burial to honour the victims of genocide (Aguilar, 2009). Over the years I

have researched the dead in Kenya, Somalia, Rwanda, Chile, El Salvador, British India, Iraq and the Commonwealth, in a manner that thirty years later could be assumed as manic or academically intense without the material realisation of the possible commonality of a researcher with the dead. I thought of the living and their tragedies as I was surrounded by the dead and many of my writings relate to the dead, where are they and why they were killed, to understand the living. For the materiality of social anthropology refrains from understanding the theological meaning of a life after biological death but it reconstructs a sociological need for an orderly description and critical assessment of the materiality and metaphysical reality of the dead. For the dead represent a universal materiality and the living universal responsibility for them while a metaphysical understanding tells us about the life of the dead, without us and in a different sphere of existence or annihilation.

For if the dead don't bury the dead, graveyards and the place of the dead have protectors who theologically represent the human and divine understanding of the dead materiality. Thus, in ancient Egypt Anubis arose as somebody who guarded burial places, secured the passage of the dead and weighted their hearts as to decide their final resting place. In the case of Chilean cemeteries, angels and saints represented in human form guard the toms and graveyards not only from the ill-spirited ghosts and demons but also from the possible looting by the living. It is at this juncture that the inter-disciplinarity work of anthropology and theology becomes important. One covers material remains, the other the understanding of the dead within a life beyond biological life, particularly an ongoing life of spirits, returning divine manifestations and the possible outcome of a biological life that continues within an afterlife. If anthropologists have been reluctant to interact with life beyond the grave, the recent work by Joel Robbins has argued that "the ideas involved in this area of theology [atonement] retain a kind of concreteness that keeps them in play in the lives people lead" (Robbins, 2020: p. 73). Further, in a recent review, Amira Mittermaier has argued contra-colonialism that "avoiding those questions only entrenches anthropology's secular self-assuredness. It avoids the risk of letting one's certainties be shaken and maybe even undone" (Mittermaier, 2024: p. 498). For, one of the problems of graves is the colonial construction of the past so that is it impossible to understand the past without physical traces and historical interconnections (Rojas, Hamann, & Anderson, 2022).

This paper, the second in the research project "Burying the Dead" reiterates the importance of the dead in people's lives as well as their importance within contemporary society. It argues that a "religious diversification" as outlined in my work on Boorana (Kenya) has taken place so that secularism and secularisation are European terms arising out of the Enlightenment that remain part of a sociocultural confrontation between the living and the dead. Indeed, this paper argues in no uncertain terms that the religious and symbolic rites that mark a biological life and the burial that follows ascertain the social commonalities and social

divisions of the living as markers of a dead materiality that can be found in every landscape, society, and family. Thus, this paper and those that follow affirm the scholarship of the dead that in turn affirms the material and metaphysical scholarship and social understanding of the connected biological life and the end of it for sentient beings, humans, animals, plants, and all living realities that surround us.

This paper is contextually located in the history, memory and present of Chile, South America, and within the existence of the realities of the dead in cemeteries, churches, memorials and *animitas*—the side road memories of the souls that departed violently, because of an accident or violence, particularly when they were minors. The power and presence of the dead haunt and animate the life of the living in Chile, because in a historically indigenous, Catholic and Christian population the dead live side by side with the living, while in India the majority Hindu die and reincarnate again in a human being or an animal and therefore their immediate memory is less material and more ritualised (Aguilar, 2024).

3. The Ordering of the Dead in Independent Chile

A group of prominent citizens declared Chile independent and sovereign from Spain on the 18th of September 1810 by a de facto needed decision to react to the imprisonment of King Ferdinand VII by Napoleon. Thus, an elite group, self-appointed as a junta, decided to take over the leadership in Chile in support of the Kingdom of Spain. Later, the Spanish forces arrived in Chile again to regain the Viceroyalty on behalf of the Spanish Crown until a war against those Spanish forces reiterated the independence of Chile by 1818. Until that time and this practice continued until the 1925 Constitution, all burials in the country followed the norms and rites of the Catholic Church, and cremation was not allowed. Theological understandings and norms were very clear: every subject of the Crown was born a Catholic and then baptised while parish records and ecclesiastical registrars took care of inscribing births and baptisms as well as marriages and death with their Catholic burials in parish consecrated cemeteries.

It could be argued that the dead were ordered according to the social categories of the living whereby large mausoleums in important cemeteries were built and occupied by families left from the colonial nobility and those acquiring lands and money after Chile's independence. Very important families had their own graveyards in private states and important national figures were buried inside churches. A short walk through the Catholic Cemetery in Santiago, for example, shows mausolea owned by old Chilean families, not indigenous peoples that owned the land, and graves owned by religious orders and congregations that buried their members within such cemetery owned and administered by the Catholic Church.

One of the tasks of civil society is the ordering of the dead. They fall under health regulations at national and international level because there are fears of infection if corpses were to be left unattended and rotting away. However, in societies where there have been socio-political processes of violence with death

results, genocide and mass murders for political reasons, most of the ordering of the dead relate to kidnapped, disappeared and unaccounted human beings and their bodies, disappearance that need to be investigated examining illegal burials, mass graves and sudden findings of bones and body parts. Thus, the minority had their own graves, the majority were buried in mass graves.

During the 18th Century the Borbon monarchs (Philip V, 1700) passed laws that regulated the gathering of people to sing to their dead, the rituals of funerals and burials. Further, Ambrosio O'Higgins, Viceroy of Chile, dictated that due to possible illness and given that most churches were not well ventilated all funerals and burials would be carried out outside parish churches. O'Higgins, the father of Bernado O'Higgins, founder of Chile, was of Irish descent, and ruled as Viceroy from May 1788 to May 1796. Ambrosio O'Higgins implemented the orders of the Spanish Crown and enforced laws fostering what we now know as cemeteries. Bernardo O'Higgins established the first cemetery outside the urban radio of Santiago, the Cementerio General that expanded over the years as to become one of the most important cemeteries of Chile.

As the post-colonial Church started to lose privileges, and by 1844, a presidential state law became the one to set the payments for burial extending the civil control of cemeteries. By 1870 and following the constitutional crisis of 1833, the lay laws of the country had been set. Some of the challenging realities for the Catholic Church were the loss of revenue from burials as well as the lack of control the Church could exercise over burials carried out in blessed and consecrated cemeteries of bodies that did not meet the requirements of Catholic Law for such burials. The tension between Church and state was bridged by the creation of separate parts of the cemetery for those outside the Church and by the creation of state parts of cemeteries and those built with state money. The decree of cemeteries of 1871 allowed for such developments and paved the separation between consecrated grounds and state cemeteries (Salas, 1872, Biblioteca Nacional de Chile, Códigos BN: MC0027438 N˚ sistema: 379392). However, the public discussions were to continue until the separation of Church and State that took place through the approval of the 1925 Chilean Constitution. For example, see the discourse by Angel C. Vicuña, deputy for Curicó at the Chilean Congress on 16, 18, 21 August 1877, advocating for the important discussion about secular sepulchres in Chile (Vicuña, 1877, Biblioteca Nacional de Chile Códigos BN: MC0027441 N˚ sistema: 68252).

The burial of bodies in Chile was regulated by local civil authorities (*municipalidades*) since the time of independence and previously by Catholic parishes where entries of baptism were also used as citizenship papers[2]. Today, the burial of bodies and the foundation of cemeteries are regulated by Decree 357 of the Ministry of Health, promulgated on 15 May 1970, published on 18 June 1970, and modified on 17 February 2014 by Decree 69 as "Reglamento General de

[2]Francisco S. Belmar, Los cementerios sujetos a la administración del estado o de las municipalidades. Santiago: Imprenta de la librería americana, 1883.

Cementerios"[3]. Thus, the Law of Cemeteries is regulated by the Health Code (Código Sanitario) and a cemetery is understood as an establishment destined to the inhumation or cremation of cadavers or human remains and to the conservation of ashes from cremations[4]. Within the Law there are two types of cemeteries: general or public and private so that public cemeteries are dependent on the state or the local government while private cemeteries are owned and dependant on different religious beliefs such as Catholic or others, foreign immigrant groups, religious communities, indigenous communities, corporations or foundations and charities[5]. In the case of pets, the first cemetery for pets was legally constituted at the Buin Zoo in 1989, and all cremation and burials of pets is regulated by the Servicio Nacional de Salud. However, in recognising the dignity of pets in Chilean society, those involved acknowledged that the indigenous peoples of Chile already had burial rites to bury their pets.

Since the independence of Chile in 1810, the elected presidents of the nation were buried with state honours in different cemeteries, but most historical personalities are buried in the Santiago General Cemetery. In some cases, as it was the case of General Augusto Pinochet, his body was buried in his family land away from the public to avoid any destruction or profanation of the tomb.

However, the availability of burial for foreign nationals has been a contested theme within Chilean burials, as they have been kept apart from others at the General Cemetery and commonwealth burials have also been recorded. Following from my paper on Commonwealth Cemeteries in India (Aguilar, 2024), I have also asked questions about Commonwealth Cemeteries in Chile. There are five casualties of soldiers of the Commonwealth buried in five Chilean cemeteries: Arica (La Beneficencia) Cemetery, Antofagasta Cemetery, Guayacan Protestant Cemetery, Magallanes Fiscal Cemetery, and Talcahuano No. 1 Cemetery. At Arica (La Beneficencia) Cemetery there is one grave of John Alexander Mair, Able Seaman Number C/JX 337647 who served at the M.V. Loreto, Royal Navy of the United Kingdom who died on 22 June 1945 and was 22 years of age. His tomb is located at 10th Block, Niche 163, Arica, Chile. Other British citizens are buried at the Cementerio General.

The British burials follow a practice of topological divisions in Chilean state cemeteries whereby the General Cemetery has also a section known as the Cementerio de Coléricos, a confined plot that was used for the burial of those who died in the cholera epidemic of 1886-1888. Tradition has allowed for innovation, but it has been kept in a substantial topological division between pre-colonial cemeteries and post-colonial cemeteries. Thus, the next section of the papers outlines the oldest and the traditional post-colonial cemeteries, findings to be expanded in future papers.

[3]Ley Chile—Decreto 357 18-JUN-1970 MINISTERIO DE SALUD—Biblioteca del Congreso Nacional (bcn.cl) https://www.bcn.cl/leychile/navegar?idNorma=12643&idParte=&idVersion=.

[4]Reglamento General de Cementerios, Título I, Artículo 2.

[5]Reglamento General de Cementerios, Título II, Artículo 15.

4. The Traditional Triangle of Santiago Cemeteries

The oldest cemetery in Chile is Cuchipuy, an archaeological site located seven kilometres south of San Vicente de Tagua Tagua, in the O'Higgins Region. It is a large area of burials in four levels with archaeological remains going back 8000 years that was explored by archaeologists of the University of Chile since 1978 (Kaltwasser, Medina, & Munizaga, 2015).

However, north of the City of Santiago, in the Recoleta area, three of the oldest cemeteries of the state of Chile find their place. The General Cemetery, the Catholic Cemetery, and the Jewish Cemetery (Cementerio Israelita) are located within a triangle known as "the axe" of cemeteries. There are Catholic cemeteries in Maipú as well as Puente Alto within the Metropolitan Region of Chile. Other private cemeteries have arisen out of the idea of green landscapes and park with no buildings on site such as the Parque del Recuerdo, and while the General Cemetery is the oldest cemetery in Santiago, the Catholic Cemetery remains the most traditional with consecrated soil for those buried with the rites of the Catholic Church, the majority religion within Chile.

5. The Santiago Catholic Cemeteries

The Catholic Cemetery, located at Calle Arzobispo Valdivieso 555, was founded in 1883 by the diocesan priest José Luis Valenzuela Castillo who responded to the same year's law that forbade ecclesiastical bodies to administer the General Cemetery and the closing of the cemetery until 1890 when it was reopened under the guidance of the Archbishop of Santiago, Mariano Casanova. From 1909 the directors of the Catholic Cemetery have been lay people. In January 2006 the Archbishop of Santiago incorporated some businessmen to take care of all Catholic cemeteries in Santiago, through a financial consortium, Acoger S.A. The Consortium took over the Catholic Cemetery Recoleta and a year later the first Crematorium in the Catholic Cemetery Recoleta was blessed. At the same time an urban memorial where to deposit the ashes was built at the land of the Parish Jesús Señor de la Vida, in the municipality of San Ramón. Such memorial marked the building of a series of 50 memorials throughout the city as to emphasise the memory and presence of the Catholic community in Santiago. Other Catholic cemeteries in Santiago that are part of this network are: Cementerio Parroquial—Catholic Cemetery Maipú, Cementerio Bajos de Mena—Catholic Cemetery Puente Alto, and the Cinerario La Recoleta—Crematorium Recoleta.

Among those renown Chileans buried at the Catholic Cemetery Recoleta: Luis Calvo Mackenna, Melchor Concha y Toro, Lindor Pérez Gacitúa, Galvarino Riveros Cárdenas, Clemente Fabres, Osman Pérez Freire, Italo Nolli Olivan, and Raúl Benítez Benítez.

There is another Catholic Cemetery in Maipú, the Parish Cemetery of Maipú. The Cementerio Parroquial Maipú had its origins in the building of the Capilla de La Victoria, whose ruins are today located in front of the Templo Votivo de Maipú, the national shrine to Chile's independence. The Temple is located on the

place where the combined Chilean and Argentinean Forces defeated the rebel Spanish soldiers at the Battle of Maipú on 5 April 1818. The parish cemetery was built on the land donated by Agustín Santiago Llona in 1895. However, because of floods all those buried on that land were moved to a hill beside the Templo Votivo, to a plot of land donated to the Catholic Church by the Pérez Canto family at the beginning of the 20th Century. Over the years the parish cemetery was part of the Parish Nuestra Señora del Carmen, thus the name Cementerio Parroquial, until in 1995 the Fundación del Carmen took it over in the name of the Archbishop of Santiago and the parish cemetery became known as the Catholic Cemetery.

There is a third Catholic Cemetery in Puente Alto.

6. The Jewish Cemetery

The Jewish Cemetery (Cementerio Israelita de Conchalí) was founded in 1932 after the purchasing of land by the Chilean Jewish Community. For the Jewish community, members of their community must be buried apart from others, and with their gravestones looking towards Jerusalem. Before the opening of the Jewish Cemetery, members of the Jewish community were buried in the Patio de los disidentes (Dissidents Quarters) of the Santiago General Cemetery.

The Patio de Los disidentes number 1 is located at the northern side of the General Cemetery and was built to bury Protestant Christians (known in the past as disidentes) and by default members of the Jewish Community who died found their graves among the disidentes. Most of the disidentes were German or British citizens, and in total ca. 3000 people are buried in the Patio de los disidentes. The dissident quarter was authorised by the Catholic Church in 1854 with one condition: the building of a seven meters' high wall with three meters of length to separate the sacred soil from the profane one, occupied by the disidentes. Before the existence of the dissident quarters, bodies to be buried were dumped among the rubbish at the side of the Santa Lucia Hill in Santiago, and before the building of the Dissident Cemetery in Valparaiso (1825), the bodies were thrown into the sea.

The Valparaiso Dissident Cemetery or British Cemetery is in the Cerro Panteón, opposite Cemetery Number 1, and on the side of the Parque Cultural of Valparaiso. For thirty years, the British Cemetery in Valparaiso was the only cemetery in which Protestants could be buried in Chile. It came about when George Seymour, the British Consul in Valparaiso, supported by the Governor of Valparaiso Robert Simpson, bought a piece of land for the cemetery in 1823.

The Jewish Cemetery of Santiago was designed by the architect Pablo Hegedüs. Those Jewish people buried there include Holocaust survivors who emigrated to Chile with the name of the concentration camp where they were prisoners written on the gravestone. There are also some Russian Jews that had been expelled from Imperial Russia and those expelled by the Soviet Bolsheviks during the 20th Century. In September 2016, an area of the Jewish cemetery was dedicated as "Beit Ha Jaim", for the burial of Orthodox Jews. There are three memorials within the

Jewish Cemetery: one to those Hungarian speakers who died in the Holocaust, one to the firemen who died in service of the company Israel of firemen of Ñuñoa, Santiago, and a third one in memory of Jaim Weizmann, first president of the state of Israel. It is mandatory for visitors who are not Jewish to register their names before visiting and to wear a dark colour kippa on their heads, showing their sorrow and their respect for the dead in the Jewish Cemetery. In March 2024, Jorge Ancelovici, Director of the Círculo Israelita and President of the Jevra Kedisha Commission in Chile declared that a full structural and financial renewal of the Jewish Cemetery had taken place (Ancelovici, 2024). Thus, not only the material structures of the cemetery were improved but the financial unity of the community was maintained so that regardless of their financial situation every member of the Jewish community could be buried in the Santiago Jewish Cemetery.

7. The Santiago General Cemetery

The General Cemetery of Santiago was founded by Bernardo O'Higgins (1778-1842), father of the Chilean nation, on 9 December 1821 with 86 hectares of land and more than two million people buried on it (Sepúlveda, 2021). For O'Higgins the cemetery was to be a sacred pantheon of Chile's history where those who visited could pay homage to great people of history. Until the military government of General Augusto Pinochet transported the body of O'Higgins to a central place opposite the La Moneda Palace, the mausoleum containing the body of Bernardo O'Higgins was located at the Santiago General Cemetery (see postcard to Damian Miquel G. Concepción, dated in Santiago 2 November 1917, Santiago.—Cementerio General. Mausoleo General Bernardo O'Higgins: [fotografía]/Hume y Ca. Santiago: Hume y Ca., 1917. Biblioteca Nacional Código: AF0017402 N˚ Sistema: 1125488 BND id: 612519).

It became a lay cemetery with the proclamation of the Law of Lay Cemeteries by President Domingo Santa María on 2 August 1883 and it is in Avenida Profesor Alberto Zañartu 951, Recoleta, Santiago (León León, 1997). The cemetery since the times of O'Higgins has had as one of its aims to keep the historical part of this city of the dead with its streets and trees. However, as a place of burial its development depended on the epidemics that took place in Santiago at that time, before antibiotics and vaccines were available. The Administrator of the General Cemetery, Manuel Arriarán, who had been the administrator since 1880 provided a report in 1892 in which he stated that such year had been the most disastrous on the history of the cemetery because of the smallpox (viruela in Spanish) epidemic that swept children and adults alike in Santiago (Arriarán, 1893: I, 3). As a result, in 1892, 9787 children and 7709 adults were buried in the General Cemetery, a total of 17,496 people in total. Statistics of the previous year (as total of people buried during the year): 1880 - 9101, 1881 - 9836, 1882 - 11,739, 1883 - 11,308, 1884 - 11,549, 1885 - 13,291, 1886 - 13,879, 1887 - 15,026, 1888 - 13,988, 1889 - 11,039, 1890 - 14,351 & 1891 - 15,225 (Arriarán, 1893: I, 3).

Another aim added to the current General Cemetery is to preserve the Patio 29,

where the bodies of those political prisoners executed without proper identification (N.N.) by the security services during the dictatorship of General Pinochet were left. Those properly identified have been moved to the Monument to the Executed and Disappeared of the years after the military coup (11 September 1973) located within the historical part of the General Cemetery.

8. Patio 29 (Patio 162) of the Santiago General Cemetery

After the military coup of 11 September 1973 thousands of suspects and supporters of the Popular Unity government of President Allende were arrested while hundreds were killed. In many cases the bodies of those who had been arrested, tortured and executed by the military were left unattended on the streets of Santiago or floating on the Santiago Mapocho River. The same procedure of execution and illegal burial took place in many parts of the country.

For example, during October 1973 in a notorious journey, and showing a harder line set by General Pinochet, a group of militaries landed in different places of the country to expedite military tribunals' decisions regarding those falsely accused of crimes against the state (known as la caravana de la muerte, the caravan of death, see ICNVR, 1996, I: 107-109.) In most of those trials the accused did not have a proper defence council and were condemned to death by firing squad. Thus, many illegal burials took place without the relatives of the dead knowing what had happened to their relatives or where their bodies had been buried. Their relatives were not informed about the place of burial.

One of the main locations where illegal burials took place more systematically between September 1973 and March 1974 was area 29 (today area 162) of the Santiago General Cemetery where crosses with no name (N.N.) marked the burial place of simple coffins containing sometimes more than one body (Excavations, Aguilar, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c, 2010d). It is difficult to know why these bodies were brought to the patio 29 and others left on the streets but in all cases illegal burials covered up the actual assassination of civilians by the Chilean Armed Forces. The striking fact was that the iron crosses with the name N.N. were visible to everybody but nobody was able to request the digging of the graves and identify those human remains until Chile's return to democracy in 1990. However, the Vicariate of Solidarity of the Catholic Church asked the first legal and public questions after human remains were found in 1978 at Lonquén, near Santiago, buried inside the ovens in an unused mine.

The historiography of these human remains (N.N.) goes back to 1991 when the judge investigating the identities of those bodies buried at Patio 29 of the General Cemetery ordered personnel from the SML to transport the remaining bones to that state institution and to use all the modern techniques available to try to identify them. Relatives of the disappeared and the executed gave DNA samples to try to find matching genetic codes and the association of relatives of the disappeared created a databank with DNA information kept in the SML. In July 2006, the Ministry of Education notified the Council of National Monuments (Consejo de

Monumentos Nacionales) of the decision to grant the Patio 29 of the Santiago General Cemetery, the category of Historical Monument because of the history that took place there, and the intention that memory be preserved and that those illegal actions might never happen again (Ministerio de Educación, Chile, 2006).

Much later, a Memorial Monument to the Disappeared and Executed was built at the entrance of the Santiago General Cemetery, a large granite monument on which the names of those executed and disappeared mentioned in the final report of the Chilean Commission for Truth and Reconciliation were inscribed, including the name of President Salvador Allende. The monument was purposely built allowing blank spaces for the possible additions of other names that at that time were not known. In 2004 the special unit for the identification of the disappeared at the SML in Santiago had published a list of those disappeared for whom they did not have a working sample of DNA from their relatives, and, through the national newspapers, had requested DNA samples from relatives, a process that was repeated through the media in 2009.

Over the years, bodies were identified, their relatives alerted, and the human remains given to the relatives for a proper burial, in graves provided by the state near the Monument to the Disappeared and Executed, if so, they wish. However, during 2006 the Chilean newspapers reported that it was quite clear, following an auditing process carried out by a foreign medical team, that there was no certainty that the identification of forty-eight of the bodies was correct. President Bachelet appointed the social worker María Luisa Sepúlveda, a member of the Valech Commission, to report on any developments directly to her. Further, the Chilean government decided to appoint a group of internationally known forensic anthropologists to doublecheck identification results and to keep copies of samples and reports abroad while providing counselling and ongoing information to the relatives of the victims identified over the years. And so, the finding of bodies of the disappeared, their identification, and burial has been a legal and forensic work through a period of fifty years from the 1973 military coup in Chile. Some of those identified are buried at the entrance to the Santiago General Cemetery.

In total there are 29 memorials to the disappeared and executed throughout Chile, giving a material sense of their memory to their relatives but as in the case of those missing in action within the Commonwealth, giving the sense of a memorial that is perceived as a cemetery in which the dead rest in peace and are visited by the living. Theologically, such memorials, including that of the Patio 29 have bridged divisions of atheism and faith. Indeed, the Patio 29 is full of crosses that marked the burial of the dead in the 1970s by the Santiago General Cemetery and within a conception in which neither atheism nor reformed Christianity was acknowledged as part of a united nation by General Pinochet or any of the other members of the first military junta. Reformed churches were only allowed to apply for legal status in the 1980s.

Other newer cemeteries in Santiago include the Metropolitan Cemetery, the Cemetery Sendero in Maipú, the Cemetery Parque del Recuerdo, and the Cemetery

Canaán in Pudahuel, and others, all in the Metropolitan Region of Chile.

9. President Piñera's Burial and the Development of Tradition

Given the processes of religious diversification of the post-Pinochet era, that is processes in which Christianity as a public religion has lost prominence, power and authority, the death of former Chilean President Sebastián Piñera (6 February 2024) created a cathartic moment of national unity and traditional burial (RTVE, 2024). Piñera was a cradle Roman Catholic, educated in one of the best Catholic schools of the country, and throughout his life a man of daily prayer and daily Mass together with his family. It was not a surprise that the accident of Piñera's helicopter and his death was followed by a state funeral which culminated with a solemn Eucharist at the Santiago Catholic Cathedral and his burial at the Cemetery Parque del Recuerdo in Santiago.

If the state relations by the leftist government of President Gabriel Boric with the Catholic Church seemed to be strained and distant, the arrival of Piñera's coffin at the Metropolitan Cathedral was followed by the prayer of the rosary and a solemn Eucharist. Before, during and after the Requiem Mass family and political supporters of Piñera took active part in the Catholic ritual, knew the songs that were used during the liturgy and proceeded to emphasise Piñera's human goodness rather than his dealings with neo-liberal economic groups and his family's personal enrichment throughout his career in politics and business.

His body was buried at the family Mausoleum in the Cemetery Parque del Recuerdo after the funeral procession stopped at the Presidential Palace where President Boric paid his respects to his predecessor. In a diverse and multi-cultural Chile, President Piñera's funeral was a unified traditional Catholic funeral.

10. Conclusion

This paper, the second within the project "Burying the Dead" of the Centre for the Study of Religion and Politics (CSRP) of the University of St. Andrews, Scotland, continues the topology, epistemology, and theology of the first paper on Commonwealth Cemeteries in India (Aguilar, 2024). Thus, it opens avenues of historical research on cemeteries as cities of the dead in which the materiality of the graves, mausolea and memorials follow the divisions of Chilean society and the hierarchical and constitutional laws that divide citizens according to their religious or secular values in a manner that rarely is explored. For human beings find it difficult to talk about death or to visit cemeteries as integral parts of urban centres.

In the case of Chile, the Spanish colonial period is set within a legal understanding that all subjects of the Spanish Crown were Catholics and therefore until the late 19th century and the constitutional separation of 1925 all cemeteries, graves and lands to bury the dead were required to be consecrated Catholic land by the Catholic Church. The diversity of cemeteries that arose after the 1990s reflects the

diversity of a nation in which the dead reflect the beliefs and social arrangements of the living. However, the religious cemeteries (Catholic and Jewish) remain the consecrated path to the afterlife for members of those faith communities. Further papers will return to the research of cemeteries and graves following the argument of this paper related to the development of the cities of the living and the dead in a synchronicity that outlines a diachronic variety with materialities and theologies of the afterlife that reflect the life and beliefs of the living.

As outlined by Laura Marina Panizo, there seems to be a tendency in Chile to accept paranormal phenomena in which the dead, particularly those who had a violent death such as the disappearing for political reasons, appear to the living who are quite happy to accept that the dead become ghosts and unwanted spirits when they trespass on the world of the living crossing from their own world of the dead (Panizo, 2022).

Further, the developments of natural graves in Chile expanded from Catholic crematoria to pets' cemeteries and the usual mediation of nature and cemeteries as it was the case of the Uruguayan Air Force plane that crashed in the Chilean side of the Andes in October 1972. A rugby team on their way to an international match found themselves buried in snow in the Chilean Andes, and after 16 of them survived and two of them walked for weeks to secure help, had to make choices on what to do with the human remains on the mountain. They were buried and blessed by a priest, and by mutual accord between the different families, they remained at the Valley of Tears in a makeshift graveyard marked with a cross. Such place had also been recognised by indigenous populations as a place where the dead met their ancestors and walked with them to "the other side".

The mass grave for the Uruguayans that died on the mountain became part of thousands of Chilean memorials and burial places that are not part of state approved cemeteries. They constitute landscapes and places that are marked by the memory of flowers and gravestones through which peace and hope are found by relatives, comparable sites to Commonwealth cemeteries where there are gravestones without bodies underneath and human beings remembered without the actual burial of bodies. For in the case of the human remains buried with the fuselage of the Uruguayan FAU 571: when you arrive at the Valley of Tears nearly two hours later, almost 13,000 ft (4000 m) in altitude and right in the centre of the cordillera of the Andes, on the border between Chile and Argentina, the panorama is grand and terrifying. It looks like a monumental amphitheatre. At the centre, on a promontory of rock, there stands an iron cross where the remains are buried of those who died in the accident (Vierci, 2024: chapter 1).

In conclusion, from a colonial unified formation of Catholic cemeteries as the only possibility for the resting of the dead, Chile became by the late 20th Century an example of diversity in state, faith, and people's created cemeteries, including private cemeteries, crematoria, pet cemeteries and burials, all signifying the wishes of families and their understanding of the hierarchies of the dead, imposed by the living.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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